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ABSTRACT

The Success for All elementary school restructuring program attempts to ensure that all students in high poverty schools will be at or near grade level in basic skills by the end of the third grade and will maintain or better that standing through the rest of their elementary school careers. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention, research-based interventions in curriculum and instruction at all grade levels, one-to-one tutoring, and other components, including the Family Support and Integrated Human Services (FSIHS) components. This report provides a research base and rationale for the FSIHS component, describes the structure and function of the FSIHS component, and illustrates how family support teams in five Baltimore (Maryland) elementary schools promote attendance, school-based interventions, parent involvement, and integration of services. The Family Support Teams are composed of all of the school's resource personnel, including guidance counselors, social workers, parent liaisons, administrators, facilitators or master teachers, and, in some sites, staff from city social service and health departments. Ten bar graphs are presented on the attendance and retention rates of each school since it began the use of Success for All and family support teams. Included are 16 references. (Author/RLC)

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

The Role of Family Support And Integrated Human Services In Achieving Success for All In the Elementary School

Lawrence J. Dolan

Barbara Haxby

Report No. 31

April 1992

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

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Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students
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The Center

The mission of the Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students (**CDS**) is to significantly improve the education of disadvantaged students at each level of schooling through new knowledge and practices produced by thorough scientific study and evaluation. The Center conducts its research in four program areas: The Early and Elementary Education Program, The Middle Grades and High Schools Program, the Language Minority Program, and the School, Family, and Community Connections Program.

The Early and Elementary Education Program

This program is working to develop, evaluate, and disseminate instructional programs capable of bringing disadvantaged students to high levels of achievement, particularly in the fundamental areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. The goal is to expand the range of effective alternatives which schools may use under Chapter 1 and other compensatory education funding and to study issues of direct relevance to federal, state, and local policy on education of disadvantaged students.

The Middle Grades and High Schools Program

This program is conducting research syntheses, survey analyses, and field studies in middle and high schools. The three types of projects move from basic research to useful practice. Syntheses compile and analyze existing knowledge about effective education of disadvantaged students. Survey analyses identify and describe current programs, practices, and trends in middle and high schools, and allow studies of their effects. Field studies are conducted in collaboration with school staffs to develop and evaluate effective programs and practices.

The Language Minority Program

This program represents a collaborative effort. The University of California at Santa Barbara is focusing on the education of Mexican-American students in California and Texas; studies of dropout among children of recent immigrants are being conducted in San Diego and Miami by Johns Hopkins, and evaluations of learning strategies in schools serving Navajo Indians are being conducted by the University of Northern Arizona. The goal of the program is to identify, develop, and evaluate effective programs for disadvantaged Hispanic, American Indian, Southeast Asian, and other language minority children.

The School, Family, and Community Connections Program

This program is focusing on the key connections between schools and families and between schools and communities to build better educational programs for disadvantaged children and youth. Initial work is seeking to provide a research base concerning the most effective ways for schools to interact with and assist parents of disadvantaged students and interact with the community to produce effective community involvement.

Abstract

The Success for All elementary school restructuring program attempts to ensure that all students in high poverty schools will be at or near grade level in basic skills by the end of third grade and will maintain or better that standing through the rest of their elementary school careers. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention, research-based interventions in curriculum and instruction at all grade levels, one-to-one tutoring, and other components, including the Family Support and Integrated Human Services component. This report provides a research base and rationale for the Family Support and Integrated Human Services component, describes the structure and function of the component, and illustrates how Family Support Teams in five Baltimore City elementary schools promote attendance, school-based interventions, parent involvement, and integration of services. Graphs are presented on the attendance and retention rates of each school since it began the use of Success for All and Family Support Teams.

Introduction

Elementary schools which serve large numbers of children at risk for school failure are under increasing pressure from all levels of government and society to better serve their students. There is unprecedented willingness to try alternative models of schooling and for the government to fund programs with demonstrated effectiveness. In general, most of these efforts fall under the descriptor "school restructuring."

Within the federal Chapter 1 program there is movement toward schoolwide change, especially in highly disadvantaged schools, and toward a focus on early prevention and intervention and away from remedial group pullout strategies (Committee on Education and Labor, 1989). Another movement is the Regular Education Initiative in special education, which emphasizes making the regular classroom the focus of efforts to help at-risk learners (Will, 1986). Despite the progress of mainstreaming, significant proportions of both special and general education teachers have never been comfortable with the practice because they lack the instructional strategies to deal with the difficulties of teaching extremely heterogeneous classes.

Finally, there has been a growing acceptance that in order to meet the needs of at-risk students there must be greater coordination and integration of human services with educational programs. A series of recent reports promote the notion that schools cannot master the job alone, but must rely on the additional support of health, mental health, and other human service assistance (Levy & Copple, 1989; Melaville & Blank, 1991, and Committee for Economic Development, 1991).

Despite all these forces at work to encourage schoolwide innovation, few coherent models have been designed for schoolwide use in schools that serve disadvantaged students, and fewer still demonstrate increases in student performance.

One exception to this is a program called Success for All (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermore, & Dolan, 1990). Success for All is designed to attempt to ensure that every student in a high poverty school will succeed in acquiring basic skills in the early grades. Success is defined as performance in reading, writing, language arts, and mathematics at or near grade level by the third grade, maintenance of this status through the end of the elementary grades, and the avoidance of retention or special education. The program seeks to accomplish this objective by implementing research-based preschool and kindergarten programs, one-to-one tutoring in reading to students (especially first graders) who need it, frequent assessment of progress in reading, and a family support and integrated services program.

This report describes the family support and integrated services program and describes the program's effects (in concert with other Success for All elements) on student attendance and retention in five urban elementary schools.

The Family Support and Integrated Services Program

For many years, school districts across the country have been struggling with the mandate to service children with learning problems. Schools have been held accountable for removing barriers to school learning -- many of which are serious family, emotional, and social problems -- that significantly affect the student's ability to perform effectively in school. For children from disadvantaged families, problems of unemployment, mental illness, drugs and alcohol, child neglect and abuse, and lack of

social supports may seriously impair their ability to attend and perform well in school. These at-risk children are likely to start school with fewer skills, fall quickly behind, and eventually drop out.

Many school districts have stretched the traditional boundaries of their mission to serve the learning needs of their students. They have recognized that these children have multiple needs and that their academic success will require the involvement of other agencies and systems. Particularly important in their coordinated delivery system are mental health, social services, and a variety of family support agencies.

School districts have responded to this need to deliver family services in varied ways with regard to actual services delivered, the financial arrangements required, and the overall administrative structure needed to support their delivery. In the area of family support, schools have encouraged the involvement of parent liaisons and school social workers, frequently funded through Chapter 1. But the roles and responsibilities of these individuals vary and we know little about their effectiveness for improving family support or their eventual impact on student achievement and adjustment to school (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Griswold, 1986).

The integration of educational, family support, and mental health services within the elementary school setting is a growing trend. Pressure is increasingly placed on the school to adopt ever-widening surrogate functions. Given the significance of early schooling in the child's developing sense of competence and self-worth and the time spent within school during critical development periods, the growth in family and mental health services could have a positive impact for all involved.

In the development of the Success for All program, it became clear from the start that in order to reach the goal of all children reading at grade level by the third grade, collaboration with other family and human services agencies would be necessary. In recent years a wide variety of school-based services models have been developed (Dryfoos, 1991). However, most of these programs are essentially models of co-location of services at the school site ("one-stop shopping") rather than true integration of services.

In contrast, the Success for All model of family support and integrated services focuses services on attainment of an extremely important outcome -- making the child successful in school. Whatever services are required for success, whatever the barriers are to learning, it is the role of the Family Support Team to assure that services are received and barriers removed. This requires a coordinated team approach to solve the problems of children who are at risk of academic failure. This focus on the outcomes of services is quite different from a model that simply uses the school building as a site for services to increase access.

In addition, the Success for All approach emphasizes prevention and early intervention rather than just a focus on crisis intervention. Problems are addressed in a proactive rather than reactive manner. The focus on the academic success of the child implies that the school is the primary coordinator of outside services.

Finally, the Success for All model has a strong belief that the approach should be one of supporting families, not supplanting families. The goal is to help families support the learning of their children, and eventually to be able to accomplish this without significant intervention.

The Family Support Team

The goal of Success for All is to have every child succeed. However, we know that some students cannot benefit from improved instruction alone because of serious family, behavioral, or attendance problems. In order to better meet the needs of these students, Success for All schools have developed Family Support Teams. These teams form a third layer of intervention behind research-based classroom instruction and one-on-one tutoring to meet the needs of children falling into academic trouble.

Students receive an automatic review by the team if they are not making progress despite the classroom and tutorial support they receive. Students who appear to be having serious emotional, behavioral, attendance, or health problems may also be referred to the Family Support Team. In this respect -- focusing on referrals due to poor academic progress -- the scope of the team is more limited than may be the case in other service integration and family support models.

Family Support Teams are composed of all of the school's resource personnel. This may include guidance counselors, social workers, parent liaisons, administrators, and facilitators or master teachers. In some sites staff from city social service and health departments also are part of the team. The composition and mandate of the Family Support Teams vary in part because of personnel available at each school. In schools with fully funded plans, money is designated to hire a full time social worker and attendance monitor. The social worker not only provides on-site clinical services but also coordinates the activities of the Family Support Team. Schools with modified plans utilize existing personnel to participate on the team. In all cases, the administration's participation on the Family Support Team has been crucial for effective school-wide implementation.

Most teams meet on a weekly basis. In the meetings, the team not only determines school-wide programs but also develops action plans to meet the needs of students referred because of academic difficulty. Depending on the needs of the school, Family Support Teams will address issues of attendance, intervention with individual students, parent involvement, and the integration of services between school and community agencies.

Building School-Parent Relationships

The first goal of the Family Support Team is to build a positive relationship between parents and the school. One part of this is to attempt to ensure that each parent has a positive experience with school staff early, so that any call about problems will not be the first a parent receives.

Some schools arrange visits with all parents new to the school. One has a special "good news" program in which teachers or other staff call or visit parents whose children have done well. A variety of programs are offered to bring parents into the school, such as a "second cup of coffee" program in which parents are offered coffee and doughnuts and an opportunity to talk informally with school staff. Workshops on reading with children, helping them with homework, and effective parenting skills are offered, as are programs on health, personal finance, and other issues. Some schools have parent literacy or computer literacy programs, and one serves as a food distribution site. Many have active parent volunteer programs, particularly providing opportunities for parents to serve as "volunteer listeners" for proud first graders. The idea is to break down the wall that so often separates the school from poor families and to communicate a concern for families as well as children. Even a parent who has never set foot in the school is likely to know someone who spends a great deal of time there, and this matters in building trust and cooperation between the community and the school.

Attendance

The team coordinates attendance activities for the school. If a school has an attendance problem, it is recommended that the team institute an attendance intervention plan. In the plan, the team develops attendance monitoring strategies, provides intervention for attendance problems (home visits, buddy systems, etc.), and implements school-wide absence prevention programs (child, class, and grade level incentives). Attendance concerns receive priority, particularly in the beginning of the school year, until stable and favorable patterns of attendance are established. If students are not in school, they cannot benefit from academic instruction, however good that instruction may be.

School-Based Intervention

A major task of the team is to develop action plans to address the needs of any child who is not progressing due to family, behavioral, or attendance problems. By identifying students early and intervening energetically, it is hoped that special education assignments can be reduced. Referrals to the team can be made by teachers, administrators, or parents. The Success for All facilitator screens all referrals first to make sure that tutoring or fundamental classroom management strategies cannot solve the problem.

After screening, the team discusses each case and typically plans a multifaceted approach to address the problem. Frequently, the team works with the parent to create a home-based family reward system or classroom behavior modification plan. The parent liaison may make home visits about attendance problems, while the facilitator and teacher may develop classroom strategies to increase motivation. The guidance counselor may work with the child and family on parenting skills or improving the child's self-esteem.

The team frequently uses the services of local agencies. For example, if the child needs glasses or if the family needs heat, it is the job of the team to make sure that such community services are provided. Once the team has developed an action plan for a case, it chooses one of its members to be a case manager. The case manager ensures that the plan is coordinated and implemented. Every case is reviewed by the team on a regular basis until the problem is resolved.

Parent Involvement Programs

Promoting involvement as a key component of student success entails not only inviting parents to school or involving them in tasks that support students and teachers, but also including parents in the *process* of developing programs to enhance student achievement.

Family Support Teams have created School Advisory Boards, composed of parents, administration and faculty, which make policy decisions and recommendations. Some teams include parents on Disciplinary Policy Committees which rewrite and review the school's discipline code.

Other teams work with parents on specific school projects. For example, one school is working with parents to create an after-school homework room. Another common activity is to provide parenting skills workshops at school.

The Family Support Team also motivates parents to support the curriculum at home. Parent workshops are given to provide parents with at-home activities which support classroom instruction. All of these projects have been designed to meet student needs and be supportive of parents as positive contributors to the educational life of their children.

Service Integration Between School and Community Agencies

Many students who have difficulties in schoolwork also have problems that require services from a range of community agencies. Families are often unable to access these services. Families frequently are more willing to use services that are convenient and in a familiar location. Therefore, depending on the needs of a particular school, Family Support Teams need to be aware of community resources and in some cases may explore making community linkages for school-based services.

Family Support Teams may provide some community health and mental health services at the school. One Success for All site has a public health nurse practitioner and part-time pediatrician who provide on-site medical care, while another school is connected with a family counseling agency which provides some school-based services. Other examples of on-site services in Success for All schools include school-aged child care, family literacy and job training programs, and mental health counseling.

Another natural association is with agencies that provide services to families in need, such

as food, clothing, shelter, or heat. One school has worked with a community agency to have a food distribution center at the school. Other schools have worked with local agencies to provide a clothes and shoe bank on the premises. The team works with parents to identify needed services and try to establish a link with local agencies in order to make community services more accessible.

The activities of the Family Support Teams vary depending on available staff, student and family needs, and community investment in the school. All teams must make sure that the needs of children who are having difficulty are being met, that school attendance programs are working, and that parents are encouraged to participate in school. Other activities will depend on the time and resource constraints of the team.

The multifaceted role of the Family Support Team is crucial for addressing the needs of students who are at the highest risk of school failure. An effective team not only attempts to meet the needs of at-risk students but also creates a school-wide climate that fosters parent involvement and a proactive approach to the complex problems that many students and families in disadvantaged schools face.

At the Sites: Family Support Programs in Five Schools in 1990-91

The site-by-site descriptions on the following pages highlight the Family Support activities and their variation in five Baltimore City schools in 1990-91, and present results of impact on retention and attendance at the schools since Success for All has been in use.

Abbottston Elementary

Family Support Team

Social worker, DSS social worker, parent liaison, school nurse, SFA facilitator.

Attendance

Attendance continues to remain high at Abbottston Elementary School. The attendance monitor continues to vigorously pursue children who are not attending regularly. The Family Support Team visits all incoming students and their families. This proactive approach often prevents much early elementary absenteeism. Abbottston continues to implement Marvelous Mondays and Fantastic Fridays: an incentive program designed to address Monday and Friday absenteeism. Classroom and school-wide attendance programs are used routinely.

School-Based Intervention

The social worker continues to direct the clinical component of Family Support.

* More than 112 children were seen by the social worker for intervention due to problems with behavior or achievement.

* Of these children, 26 were identified as high risk and were given regular counseling and placed on behavior contracts. Parents were notified and involved regularly in scheduled sessions.

* 53 children were followed regularly by the attendance monitor.

* Special Friend Project: teachers have volunteered to spend extra time each week with a student who could benefit from some extra attention.

Parent Involvement

Abbottston continues to promote strong parent involvement in the school.

* 30 workshop sessions were held for parents this year, and 580 parent contacts were made during these workshops.

* 147 parent volunteer contacts were made in the classroom and 148 in non-classroom areas.

* PTO participation has improved. PTO raised money to buy new playground equipment.

* The Family Support Team held a Family Forum on Health Issues this year which was well attended.

* The social worker held parenting skills training classes this fall.

* Abbottston continues to host an informal drop-in program for parents every other week called A Second Cup of Coffee.

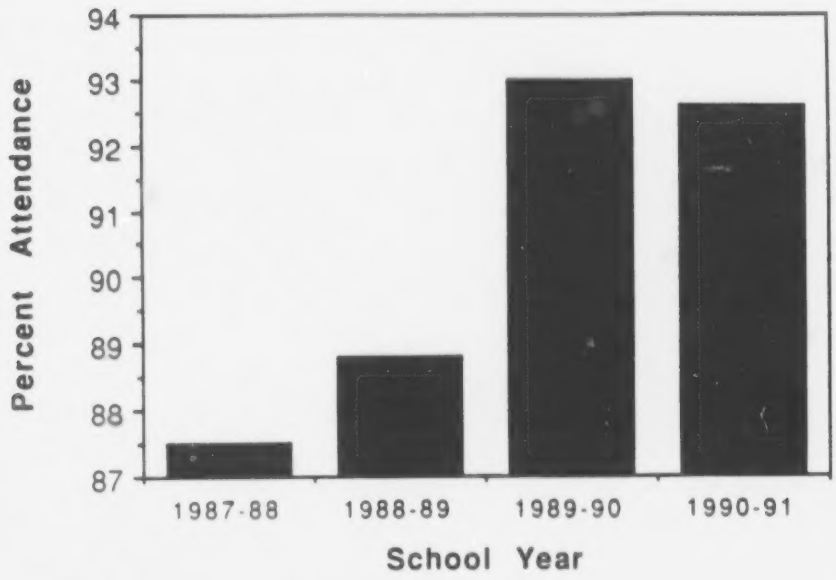
* The school social worker and DSS social worker continue to visit and welcome incoming K and PreK families.

* The Family Support Team participated in 11 workshops with parents outside the school setting.

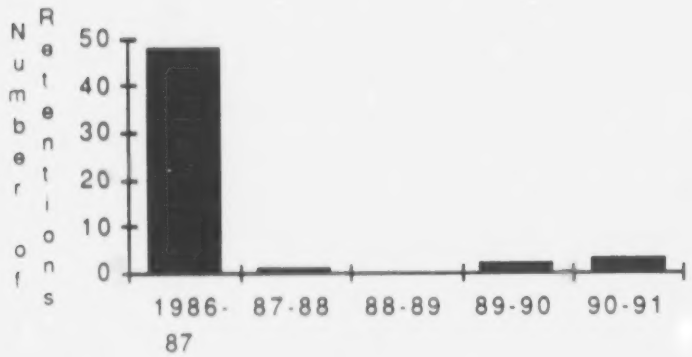
Service Integration

During this past year, Abbottston has had an on-site health clinic from the health department. A nurse practitioner and pediatrician are available part time at the school. The school is able to provide immunizations as well as check-ups.

Abbottston Elementary Attendance



Abbottston Elementary Retentions



Dallas Nicholas Elementary

Family Support Team

Guidance counselor, parent liaison, master teacher, attendance monitor, SFA facilitator, principal.

Attendance

Dallas Nicholas has put most of their effort into attendance this year. With the help from a Fund of Educational Excellence grant that the Family Support Team wrote, they were able to hire a part time attendance monitor, who has been an invaluable asset and has run a vigorous program to promote attendance. Attendance has increased significantly this past year.

School-Based Intervention

The guidance counselor was the cornerstone for school-based intervention this year.

* 30 cases were reviewed by the team and on-going plans were developed for fifteen.

* The guidance counselor and the SFA Facilitator hosted a 5-session group for parents whose children were having difficulty. The group had 12 members who attended regularly.

In addition, the guidance counselor saw individual students and families.

* The Family Support team enlisted the services of a graduate student in Social Work from a community agency: the Fellowship of Lights. This student worked with 20 families during the year.

Parent Involvement

Dallas Nicholas hosted several activities to promote parent involvement in the building. In January, the school hosted a "Happy Hour" party for staff and parents. More than 150 parents attended and the response was very positive.

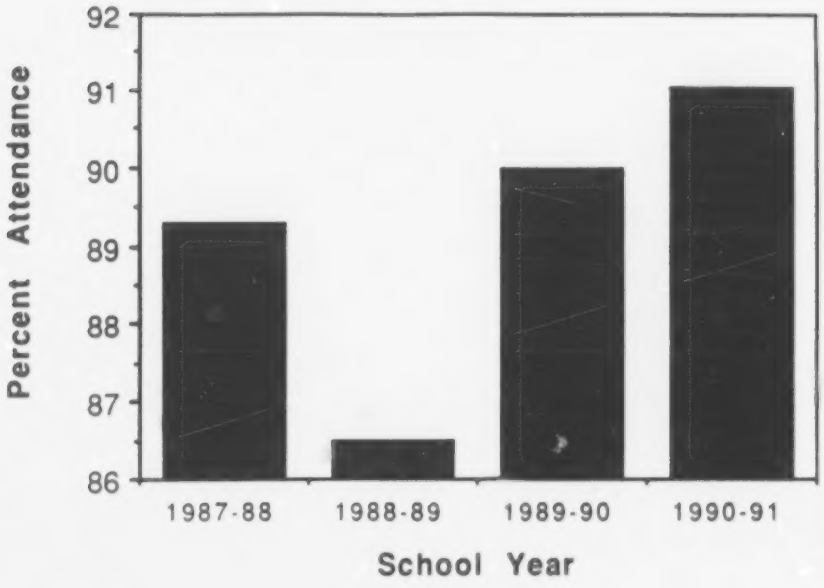
The guidance counselor and SFA facilitator held a series of workshops for PreK parents to promote emergent literacy skills and inform parents about the kindergarten and PreK program. Lending libraries for parents were created and parents were trained in STaR and making big books. About a dozen parents participated in this activity. Parental and staff response was very positive and the program will expand next year to other SFA components.

A grant was written to develop a family literacy program. At present funding is being sought in order to provide this service.

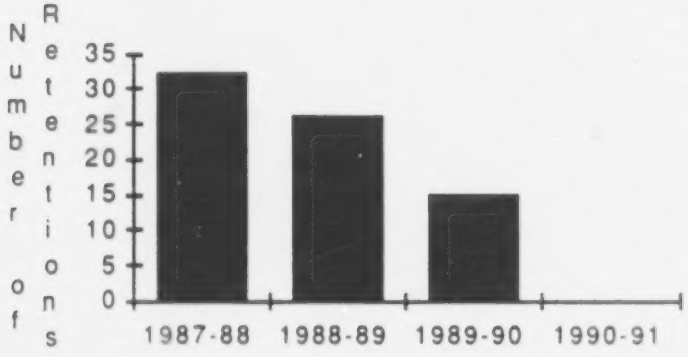
Service Integration

Several outside agencies have been recruited by the Family Support Team and provide a range of services. The Maryland Food Committee uses Dallas Nicholas as a food distribution site. Fellowship of Lights provided a family therapy student for eight hours a week. The school has Mark Beck Associates, an architectural firm, as a corporate sponsor. Mr. Beck provides weekly enrichment activities, a boys club, and works to promote parent involvement in the school.

Dallas Nicholas Attendance



Dallas Nicholas Retentions



Dr. Bernard Harris Elementary

Family Support Team

Assistant principal, parent liaison, attendance monitor, SFA Facilitator, guidance counselor, principal.

Attendance

The school changed attendance monitors this year. This caused some disruption in their attendance program; however, attendance continues to be at a higher level than before program initiation. School attendance is affected by low preK attendance. Both the guidance counselor and the attendance monitor will visit homes of preK children during the fall in order to promote good attendance and parent involvement. Individual and family incentives were utilized again this year. Banners for perfect attendance were used in all classrooms.

School-Based Intervention

* 42 children were reviewed and case plans developed by the team.

* The guidance counselor developed a partner group for 4th and 1st graders who were having difficulty with behavior. The fourth graders met with the first graders on a weekly basis for eight weeks as peer supporters. Sixteen children participated in the project.

* The guidance counselor and the behavior teacher did a morning and afternoon check-in group for twelve children who had behavior contracts.

Parent Involvement

There was strong parent involvement again this year. The Fund for Educational Excellence continues to support a project at this school to increase parent participation.

* Parents formed security patrols for around the building.

* The I Care Parent club met weekly, raised money through a Bake and Craft Sale, held an African banquet and fashion show, participated in classroom volunteer activities, and issued a parent newsletter.

* Eighteen parents participated as Volunteer Listeners in the building.

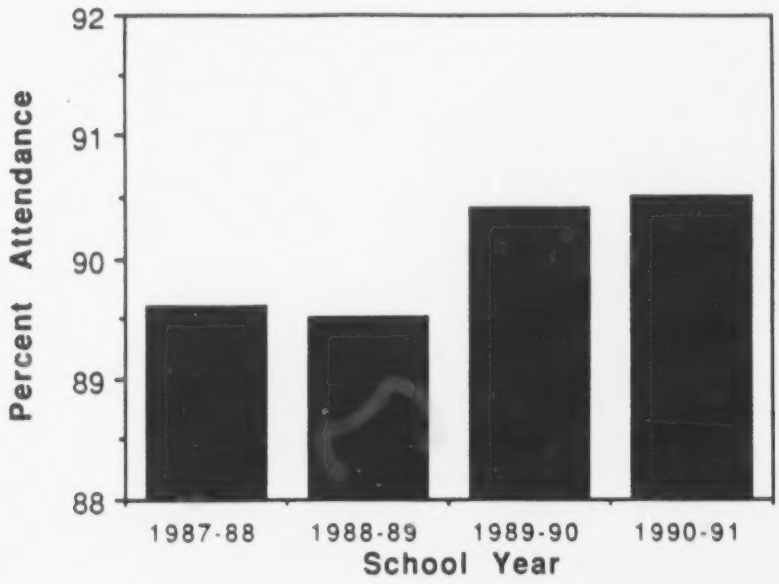
* Twenty parents were trained in cooperative learning strategies and will be part of a Parent Team for school planning next year.

* The guidance counselor and the parent liaison hosted an eight-week parenting skills workshop in which 15 parents participated.

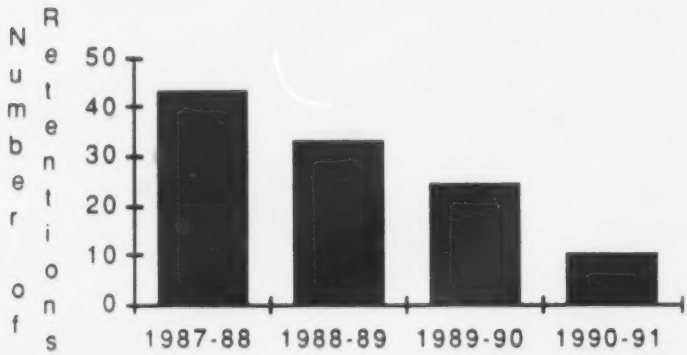
Service Integration

Bernard Harris has several outside groups providing service for the school. Project Raise provides a mentorship program. Kid's Place held a group for children affected by drug abuse. As part of a partnership program, students at the Key School in Westminister provide attendance incentives to Bernard Harris students, and students at Bernard Harris have presented an assembly on black history at Key.

Bernard Harris Attendance



Bernard Harris Retentions



Harriet Tubman Elementary

Family Support Team

Chair, two reading tutors, SFA facilitator, guidance counselor, behavior teacher.

Attendance

The school was able to hire a part-time attendance monitor toward the end of the year, and attendance made modest gains. Plans and personnel have been developed to expand attendance services for next year.

School-Based Intervention

The Family Support Team continues to have a strong clinical focus.

* 72 cases were reviewed by the team and plans developed. Families were actively invited to participate at team meetings and all families of children who were retained this year or who were close to being retained were notified. Review meetings with the family and teachers will be held in September.

* The school wholeheartedly embraced the School Buddy program. Seventeen children had school buddies and all the buddies were active in working with their child.

* The school also instituted an after-school homework room which was staffed by a teacher and parent volunteers.

Parent Involvement

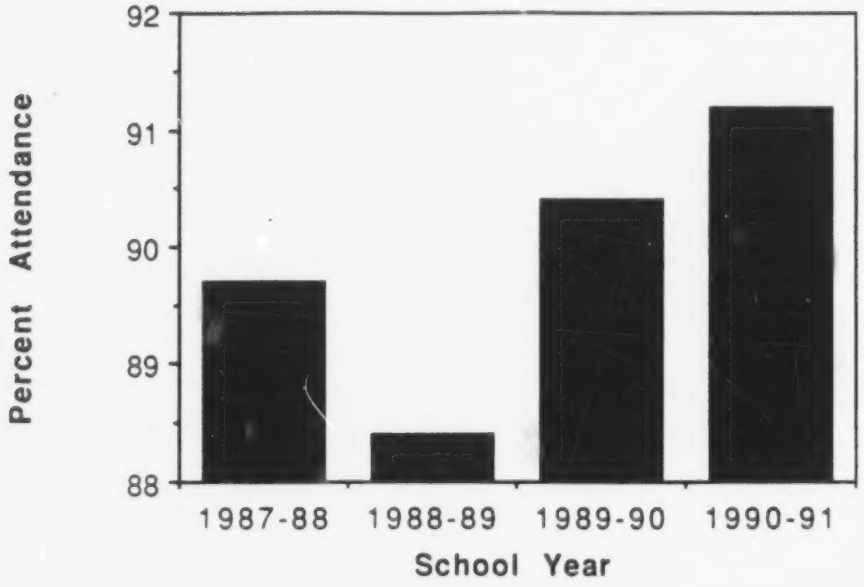
Parents at Harriet Tubman developed a strong Volunteer Listener program this year. Eighteen parents participated in the program. The PTO provided special chairs for the volunteer listeners to use. This program had a high profile in the school. When the mayor arrived for a visit, he participated as a volunteer listener.

The school also developed a School Advisory Board this year. This board has strong parent participation and will help set direction for parent activities next year. The school hosted a father-daughter banquet during the year which 60 people attended.

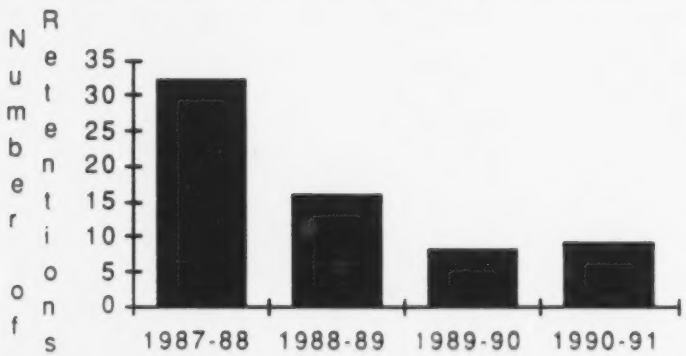
Service Integration

Fellowship of Lights provided a part-time family counseling student at Harriet Tubman this year.

Harriet Tubman Attendance



Harriet Tubman Retentions



City Springs Elementary

Family Support Team

Principal, facilitator, social worker, guidance counselor, parent liaison, attendance monitor.

Attendance

The school continues to have a highly transient student body due to the renovation of local housing projects. This continues to affect attendance.

Still City Springs has made gains in attendance since program initiation, and strong outreach efforts by the attendance monitor, social worker and guidance counselor are planned for the fall.

School-Based Intervention

Children were routinely discussed by the Family Support Team this year. Family Support meetings were held weekly. Both the parent liaison and the social worker routinely visit the homes of families unable to come to school.

* 56 children received ongoing counseling by the social worker and guidance counselor.

* 70 children received short-term service.

* 150 family meetings were held.

* The social worker held two ongoing groups. One was a girls' group and the other was a parent-child preteen sexuality group. In addition, the social worker ran a student of the month program.

* The principal continued her program "Catch a Child Being Good."

* The guidance counselor had a boys' group in which eight boys participated. Eight other boys were included in a mentorship program.

Parent Involvement

Parents were active at City Springs Elementary School.

* Parents manned a Crisis Center throughout the year.

* 16 parents participated in a twice weekly parenting seminar series held by the parent liaison and the social worker.

* Eight parents of children having serious difficulty at City Springs participated in a 6-part parenting workshop series.

* Parents participated in planning and implementing a program to improve the behavior in the cafeteria.

* There is an Adult Literacy program on site in the building. All the literacy program parents volunteer in the building for an hour a day as well as pursue their own educational goals.

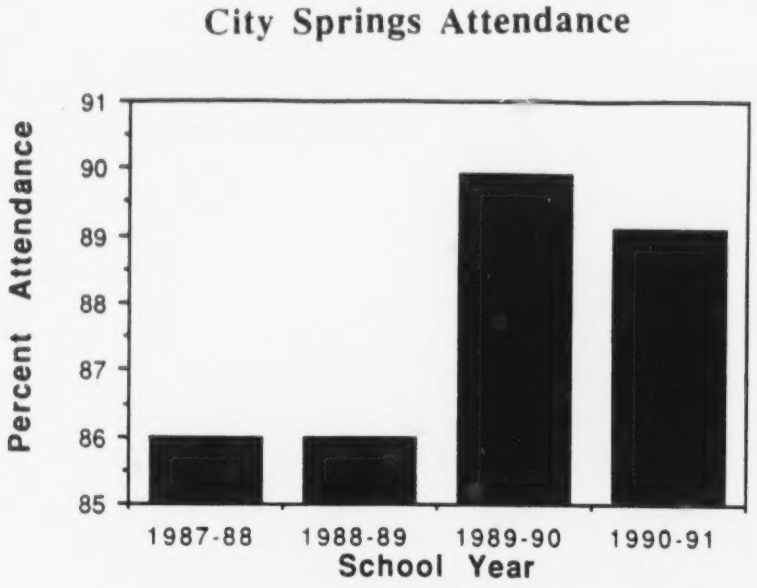
* Every Tuesday parents come in and participate in a Read-In and Volunteer Listener program.

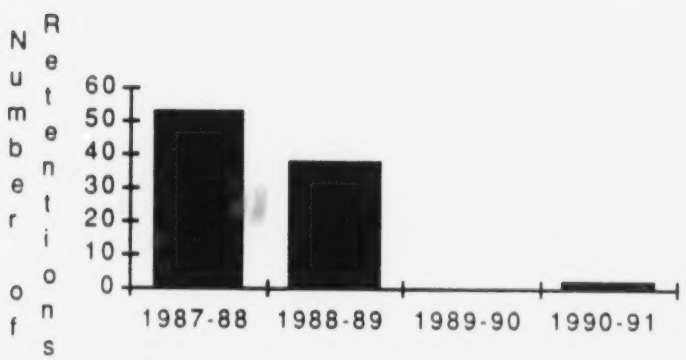
* Finally, the parent liaison worked with parents and the boys club to implement an after-school homework club. Sixty children utilized this program.

Service Integration

City Springs has an Adult Literacy program on site. In addition, the boys' and girls' clubs have a school link program designed to provide support services for high risk children. The social worker has worked with the Maryland Food Committee on a food recruitment and food distribution program -- "Food for the Homeless." Both the parent liaison and the school social worker participate on the housing committees at

the two public housing facilities in the area. They are therefore able to coordinate with the service providers in those facilities in a more timely fashion.





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